

HOUSE RESOLUTION 329
By Langster

A RESOLUTION to recognize St. Vincent de Paul Church and School.

WHEREAS, it is appropriate that the members of this General Assembly should recognize those venerable religious institutions and their congregations who, through their unflagging capacity for love, dedication of spirit, and faith in God, enrich the lives of people in their communities; and

WHEREAS, the good people of St. Vincent de Paul Church and School in Nashville comprise one such congregation; they are pausing to recognize and reflect this year on their more than seventy years of service to the Lord and their community; and

WHEREAS, the Catholic Community of St. Vincent de Paul began with Bishop Alphonse Smith celebrating Mass at 17th Avenue North and Heiman Street on December 11, 1932; a simple two-story white frame house served as a chapel for eighty people and as a school with two classrooms housing four grades; and

WHEREAS, as a fledgling mission church, St. Vincent de Paul was staffed by the Josephite Fathers and the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament from Holy Family Church and School in South Nashville, which was at that time the only African-American Catholic church and school in the Nashville diocese; Father Michael J. Neary, S.S.J., was the founding pastor; and

WHEREAS, St. Vincent remained a part of Holy Family Parish until April 15, 1940, when it was decreed a separate parish by Bishop William L. Adrian, D.D., of Nashville; Father Samuel Homsey, C.P.P.S., served as its first pastor as an independent parish; and

WHEREAS, in August of 1942, this new mission was turned over to the Franciscan Friars of the Sacred Heart Province, and Father Theophane Goett, O.F.M., served as the first

Franciscan pastor; Father Theo resided at Father Ryan's rectory until 1945, when a rectory was purchased at 1708 Heiman Street; and

WHEREAS, by 1944, St. Vincent Church had grown to serve 100 parishioners, 195 children were enrolled at St. Vincent School, and more than 90 college students from Fisk, Meharry, and Tennessee State University were in regular attendance; Father Kevin Roe, O.F.M., was appointed Associate Pastor, and he and his mother were instrumental in the growth of the church; and

WHEREAS, Father Theo was followed as pastor by Father Jordon Schell, O.F.M., in 1946; Father Myron Landolt, O.F.M., in 1948; and Father Berchmans Serre, O.F.M., in 1951; Father Myron supervised the construction of a new school building consisting of five new classrooms and a gymnasium, which was dedicated by Bishop William Adrian in May of 1950; and

WHEREAS, the current rectory was built in 1953, and in August of 1954, the beloved Father Kevin Roe was appointed pastor. In the same year, Holy Family Church and School was closed, and a convent was built at St. Vincent to house the Blessed Sacrament Sisters who taught at the school; within a few years, their presence and ministry further spurred the growth of the parish, requiring the current, larger church to be built at the same location in 1960; and

WHEREAS, Father Kevin's successor, Father Kenneth, O.F.M., saw St. Vincent through the difficult years of integration, as well as the dramatic changes of Vatican Council II, and in 1973, the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament withdrew from ministry at St. Vincent; the school was then only able to continue through the efforts of the dedicated staff of lay teachers who agreed to remain and to contribute a percentage of their earnings; and

WHEREAS, from 1998 to 2004, St. Vincent School was staffed by the Daughters of Charity along with lay teachers and staff, and today, is completely staffed with dedicated lay employees and supported by the local community; the school serves parishioners, other Catholics, and the community at large, ever mindful of its mission to live and teach Christ's message of love and discipleship; and

WHEREAS, today, St. Vincent de Paul Church has a membership of more than 300 families who are most thankful for the contributions of those who have gone before them in the establishment and continuing legacy of their parish; and

WHEREAS, the congregation of St. Vincent de Paul Church and School has been guided by a stream of dedicated and talented pastors for more than seventy years, and under its current pastor, Father Frank Coens, O.F.M., is looking forward to serving the needs of the Nashville community for many years to come; and

WHEREAS, St. Vincent de Paul Church and School has stood on the rock-solid foundation of Christian belief, service, and love for more than seventy years, serving as a bastion of faith and outreach to the people of Nashville and Davidson County; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, that we honor and commend St. Vincent de Paul Church and School for more than seventy years of continued spiritual, theological, and communal growth, and offer our best wishes for its continued prosperity to the pastor and congregation.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.